

## Message Text

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PAGE 01     ADDIS 12646 310549Z  
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00  
/020 W

-----310859Z 040931 /21

R 301512Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2176

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12646

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SWEL, ET, US  
SUBJ: HARAR EYE CLINIC

REF: STATE 312859

1. I AM MOST APPRECIATIVE OF POSITIONS TAKEN BY DEPT AND  
BUMED RE FUTURE OF HARAR CLINIC AND ALLEGED QUESTIONING OF  
DOCTOR BY "INTELLIGENCE OFFICER," BUT DISMAYED THAT IEF STILL  
SEEMS TO BE WAVERING. I PARTICULARLY REGRET THAT IEF WANTS  
LETTER FROM MINISTER OF HEALTH STATING THAT EPMG WANTED PROGRAM  
CONTINUED, AND FEAR THAT IF WE ASK FOR LETTER, SUCH  
REQUEST WILL INDEED BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND/OR, AT A MINIMUM,  
TIME CONSUMING.

2. EPMG HAS REPEATEDLY ASSURED US AT ALL LEVELS OF THEIR  
INTEREST IN CONTINUING PROGRAM. INDEED, WE CONTINUE RECEIVE  
PHONE CALLS ASKING WHEN DOCTORS ARE RETURNING. DR. LAWRENCE  
KING TOLD US THAT MINISTER HIMSELF HAD GIVEN HIM SUCH AN  
ASSURANCE DURING HIS VISIT TO ADDIS IN LATE OCTOBER  
(ADDIS 11300). IT SEEMS TO ME THAT TO ASK EPMG NOW TO  
CONFIRM WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TELLING US ALL ALONG WILL BE  
TO CAST DOUBT ON WHAT THEY HAVE ALREADY TOLD US AND  
RISK GETTING THEIR BACKS UP. MOREOVER, AS DEPT KNOWS  
AND IEF SHOULD ALSO, THE PRESENT EPMG IS NOT STRONG ON  
THE WRITTEN WORD. WHERE MINISTRIES MAY SOMETIMES FEEL  
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ABLE TO GIVE VERBAL ASSURANCES, THE WRITTEN WORD USUALLY  
REQUIRES CLEARANCE SOMEWHERE IN PMAC. THIS CAN NOT ONLY  
BE TIME CONSUMING, BUT MAY CATCH EYE OF SOME UNFRIENDLY  
PMAC MEMBER INTERESTED IN CAUSING TROUBLE FOR REASONS  
TOTALLY UNRELATED TO THE PARTICULAR ISSUE OR PROBLEM.  
FINALLY, I HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING WHY A

LETTER OF GOOD INTENTIONS IS REQUIRED WHEN THE ISSUE STILL APPEARS TO BE ONE OF SECURITY.

3. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, I HOPE DEPT AND BUMEND CAN PERSUADE IEF TO DROP IDEA OF LETTER FROM MINISTER AND ACCEPT ASSURANCES ALREADY GIVEN RE BOTH SECURITY AND EPMG INTEREST IN MAINTAINING PROGRAM. NEITHER I NOR ANYONE ELSE CAN GIVE IEF PERFECT GUARANTEE OF SECURITY, BUT OUR BEST JUDGMENT CONTINUES TO BE THAT DOCTORS WILL BE ABLE FUNCTION AS IN PAST, MITTAG EXCEPTED WHICH WE STILL BELIEVE WAS ESSENTIALLY PERSONAL MATTER.

4. RE "POLITICAL ACTIVITY," WE ARE AT LOSS TO KNOW WHAT STIMULATED CONCERN. WE VIEW HARAR CLINIC AS TOTALLY NON-POLITICAL, HUMANITARIAN EFFORT AND HAVE NO DESIRE OR INTENTION WHATSOEVER OF INVOLVING IT OR THE DOCTORS IN POLITICAL MATTERS. WE DO INQUIRE OF DOCTORS WHEN WE SEE THEM ABOUT CONDITIONS IN HARAR AS PART OF OUR CONTINUING PROCESS OF EVALUATING CONDITIONS EVERYWHERE IN ETHIOPIA AND WOULD EXPECT TO DO SO IN FUTURE, BUT NO ONE REPEAT NO ONE IN THIS EMBASSY IS TASKED WITH DEBRIEFING THE DOCTORS AS PART OF HIS REGULAR DUTIES. DEPT WAS ABSOLUTELY CORRECT IN SAYING THAT IF WE ARE TO EVALUATE HARAR SITUATION IN TERMS OF FUTURE OF CLINIC OR FOR ANY OTHER REASON, WE MUST TURN TO THOSE WHO HAVE FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE PLACE. I WOULD HARDLY CALL THIS "INTELLIGENCE" AS DESCRIBED REFTEL. IF DEPT OR BUMED CAN FURNISH US SPECIFICS OF CASE MENTIONED PARA 2 REFTEL, WE SHALL BE GLAD TO CHECK IT OUT.  
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5. LASTLY, I WOULD HOPE BOTH DEPT AND BUMED FOR REASONS KNOWN TO BOTH CAN SUCCEED IN PERSUADING IEF THAT CDR. MITTAG'S DESCRIPTION OF WHOLE PROBLEM SHOULD BE VIEWED AS SUSPECT. ONE OF OTHER DOCTORS HERE AT TIME, LT. BEN HO, HAS SINCE RETURNED TO WASHINGTON WITH RATHER DIFFERENT OUTLOOK. IEF MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO TALK WITH HIM AS WELL.

6. COMMENT (FYI); OBVIOUSLY IF SINCE QUA NON FOR CONTINUANCE OF CLINIC IS LETTER FROM MINISTER, WE WILL TRY FOR IT, BUT AS INDICATED, I WOULD PREFER NOT TO (END FYI).  
TIENKENB

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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